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Via email: consultations@canterbury.gov.uk
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21 October 2025

Dear Planning,

NETWORK RAIL RESPONSE TO DRAFT CANTERBURY DISTRICT LOCAL PLAN FOCUSED CONSULTATION (REGULATION 18) SEPTEMBER 2025

These representations are submitted to Canterbury City Council ('the Council') by Network Rail Infrastructure Limited ('Network Rail'), in respect of the Regulation 18 focussed consultation on the draft Canterbury District Local Plan ('the Local Plan').

It is important that opportunities to promote the use of the railway as a more sustainable modes of transport are identified and taken forward. The railway network is a vital element of the country's economy and a key component in the drive to deliver the Government's sustainable agenda.

Network Rail is the statutory undertaker for maintaining and operating railway infrastructure of England, Scotland, and Wales. As statutory undertaker, Network Rail is under license from the Department for Transport (DfT) and Transport Scotland (TS) and regulated by the Office of Rail and Road (ORR) to maintain and enhance the operational railway and its assets, ensuring the provision of a safe operational railway. As a matter of course, proponents of sites which are close to the railway boundary or sites which could affect the railway asset directly are required to engage with our Asset Protection and Optimisation team (ASPRO)

Representations

This section sets out the areas for which comments have been made in relation to the Regulation 18 focussed consultation.

- Canterbury area

- Whitstable area
- Herne Bay Area
- Rural

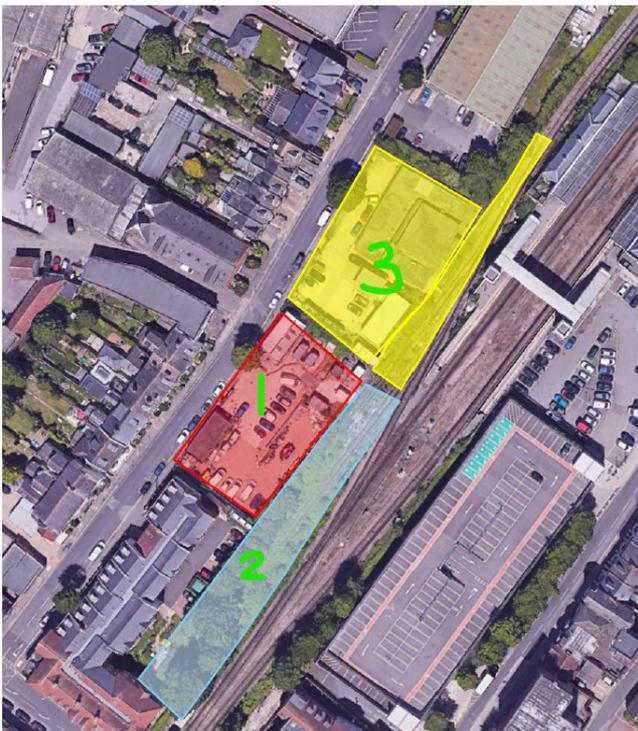
Canterbury

Policy C3: Land north of Canterbury West station

NR controls the land within the allocation and has promoted the opportunity to make an efficient use of non-operational railway land within the draft allocation as set out in the 2024 draft Local Plan consultation. NR welcomes the retention of the draft allocation within the Local Plan as it progresses to Regulation 19 consultation stage. In respect of the development mix, the draft allocation proposes:

- a) Train station improvements, including platform extension to accommodate 12 coaches and;
- b) An innovation hub building of a suitable scale to provide research and development and/or office space.

There remains the need for the station improvements at Canterbury West as capacity and accessibility remains a real constraint to increased growth. However, NR wish to re-appraise the most efficient use of other land not required for these improvements to best contribute towards local need. As part of this, NR has undertaken work to determine if land could be released from the allocation that can deliver residential uses. This work has demonstrated that part of the allocation would be suitable for residential and therefore we submit an update to the draft allocation within the Local Plan to include residential use. The below image shows the proposed uses within the draft allocation.



Site 1 is identified for wholly residential development. Work undertaken has demonstrated that the site could support 9 houses or 22 flats. Whilst no determination on housing mix has yet been made, the ability to bring forward flatted development close to the station would make efficient use of a

brownfield site in a highly sustainable location. This is also considered to be the most viable use of the site.

Site 2 is identified as land that could be available to support site 1 and be reserved for platform extensions to meet requirement part a of the draft allocation.

Site 3 would be available for a mixed-use re-development, including the provision of a new entrance to the station from Roper Road. The remainder of the red line of the draft allocation, heading east would be retained as land for station improvements including platform extensions.

Therefore, we request the draft allocation be amended at point B to include the ability to bring forward residential uses within the allocation and to include a mixed-use scheme. The suggested wording is below:

b) residential use and a mix of uses as suitable to accommodate a new station entrance.

NR is happy to discuss the detail as the Plan moves forward and would welcome a discussion with the Council. It is our view that by including residential and being more flexible around the other uses, this would provide a scheme that is more deliverable at the station and makes efficient use of land.

Policy N1 – Land at Merton Park

NR welcomes the inclusion of a mobility hub within the development. The nearest station is Canterbury East however, given the faster services available, Canterbury West may be the preferred station to use the rail network. However, we do acknowledge the inclusion of improvements to Canterbury East within the draft allocation and this is supported given proximity to the site. The mobility hub should provide scope to better connect the development with the two stations and include real time travel information for the railway.

Policy N4 – Land south of Littlebourne Road

The inclusion of 4 iv is supported. As part of this we would welcome contributions towards improving the facilities at the station, including accessibility and cycle provision.

Policy N5 – Land south of Bekesbourne

The inclusion of 4 iv is supported. As part of this we would welcome contributions towards improving the facilities at the station, including accessibility and cycle provision.

Policy N16 – St Stephens Road

Given the proximity to St Stephens level crossing, the draft allocation should include the need to consider the impact of vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists on the level crossing generated by the proposed development.

Policy N17 – Land at Whitehall Close

Within 2c of the draft allocation, the development should provide anti-repass fencing along the length of the railway boundary to protect the safety of occupiers and the safe and efficient running of the railway.

Whitstable

Policy N20 – Land east of Chestfield Road

The draft allocation is near Chestfield and Swalecliffe station, where facilities are limited. We would welcome consideration of how the site could contribute towards improving accessibility to the station. We note the site relying on improving connections with draft allocation W4 and whether

opportunities exist to consider the cumulative effect of these connections. It may be that Whitstable station, with its better facilities, may be a more suitable station to provide those connections with.

Herne Bay

Policy N29 – Land at Home Farm, Strode Park

The site is close to Herne Bay station which is now fully accessible and can cater for all passengers, including those with mobility issues. We would encourage the site to promote improved access to the station to make use of the investment in Herne Bay station, as part of the access and transport strategy.

Policy N30 – Land to the west of Bullockstone Road

The site is reasonably close to Herne Bay station which is now fully accessible and can cater for all passengers, including those with mobility issues. We would encourage the site to promote improved access to the station to make use of the investment in Herne Bay station, as part of the access and transport strategy.

Rural

Policy N31 – Chartham Paper Mill

The site is close to Chartham station which would be a benefit to future occupiers of the development. Opportunities to improve access to the station are welcome to provide direct and safe access, especially for pedestrians and cyclists. A contribution towards improving facilities at Chartham station to accommodate increased use would be justified

Policy N32 -Land at Rattington Street

The site is close to Chartham station which would be a benefit to future occupiers of the development. Opportunities to improve access to the station are welcome to provide direct and safe access, especially for pedestrians and cyclists. A contribution towards improving facilities at Chartham station to accommodate increased use would be justified

Conclusions

The rail network is a critical component of sustainable development and strategic connectivity. NR welcomes further engagement with the Council as the Plan progresses for all stations within the District.

Kind regards,

Craig Hatton MRTPI

Senior Town Planner

Network Rail Infrastructure Limited